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ABSTRACT

Presented at the Pan Pacific Conference on the Education of Exceptional Children (Honolulu, Hawaii, February 9-12, 1971), the paper deals with the education of handicapped children and youth in New Zealand. Some of the social, geographical, and economical factors which have shaped New Zealand's educational system are mentioned. The development of the special education services is discussed and some features of their structure and administration are described. Some of what the author considers the more important trends in New Zealand's special education services and some of the issues now facing those who must plan future development are also explored. (CD)

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DAVID H. ROSS

THE EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NEW ZEALAND

May I first express my Government's appreciation of the invitation to attend this first Pan-Pacific Conference on the Education of Handicapped Children and Youth. New Zealand has been able to develop special education services which now meet the basic educational needs of most of its handicapped young people, but we still have much to learn if we are to make the best use of the resources already available for this purpose, and we have to plan now to meet the needs of the children who will require special education in the future. This conference provides us with a valuable opportunity to learn from your experience. I hope that, in return, you will find something relevant to your work in this short review of the educational services which New Zealand has provided for those children who have special needs.

This paper has three sections. The first details very briefly some of the social, geographical and economic factors which have shaped New Zealand's education system, including its programmes for handicapped children. The second sketches the development of our special education services, and describes some features of their structure and administration which seem relevant to the theme of this conference. The brief final section notes some of the more important trends in New Zealand's special education services, and some of the issues now facing those who must plan their future development.

In contrast to some of the countries represented here, New Zealand is a comparatively small country. Its population of just under three million people is spread widely across its two main islands, which have a total area of 103,000 square miles, to give an average population density of 25 persons per square mile - a comparatively low figure by international standards. About half the total population lives in the northern half of the north island, which contains the largest urban area, centred on Auckland, with nearly 600,000 inhabitants. Although New Zealand earns most of its foreign exchange by exporting farm products only 22 percent of its population live in a rural area. This percentage is continuing its steady decline while farm production continues to increase.

About 8.5 percent of New Zealanders are Maoris, descendants of its original Polynesian inhabitants. Almost all the remainder are of British origin, and their culture is predominant. New Zealand is firmly committed to a policy of racial equality, though it is still working to turn that policy into everyday practice. It is giving increasing attention to the difficult but important task of ensuring that its Maori citizens and their racial cousins from the Pacific Islands, who have entered the country in increasing numbers over the past 20 years, have a true equality of

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opportunity without sacrificing their own cultural identity.

The history of systematic European settlement in New Zealand dates only from 1840, and its people see themselves as citizens of a young country with great potential for future growth. But in international terms the New Zealand annual average income of NZ$1,444 places the country in the "developed" rather than the "developing" category, and for the past 30 years all but a handfull of its adult working population has been able to obtain regular employment. By international standards again, New Zealand has no very wealthy or very poor citizens, no deep religious divisions and no fundamental social or economic differences between life in its urban and rural areas. This does not mean that New Zealanders are all alike, which would be far from the truth, or that our children have identical home backgrounds, but the range of variation in New Zealand on most of the measures which can be applied to economic and social matters is certainly less than in most other countries.

Since 1876, the year before the introduction of free and compulsory education, New Zealand has had a single central government which has been wholly responsible for the introduction, financing and direction of all its state health, education and welfare services. Although the local administration of education is in the hands of elected district and school boards, each state school is, in fact, part of an integral national education system. This provides free education for all children from five to 19 years of age, and all except the few children who are profoundly mentally retarded must attend school until they are 15. Tertiary education is available to all who meet its comparative liberal admission standards and, at the base of the educational ladder, the state pays the major share of the cost of the rapidly growing pre-school programme, which now caters for about 35 percent of children who are three or four years of age. Roughly 11 percent of all pupils attend private schools, which receive limited financial assistance from the state.

One final point will conclude this background statement. Although modern means of travel and communication have greatly reduced the social and cultural effects of New Zealand's geographical isolation it remains separated from its nearest neighbour - Australia - by 1200 miles of rather stormy ocean. In earlier years the encircling seas forced us to develop our own way of life, now perhaps their importance is more in helping us to retain our national culture in a shrinking world. Wherever the balance is drawn, our insularity has fostered an education system which was based largely on British practice and thinking, has drawn on subsequent British, American and (to a lesser extent) Australian experience and research, but is now professionally autonomous with its own unique characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. Some of these may show through as I describe some features of our special education services for handicapped children.

The formal beginning of special education services in New Zealand dates back to 1880, when the New Zealand government decided to establish a school for deaf children, to be administered (as it still is) by the State Department of Education. This move was followed by Government assumption of the costs of educating the blind children enrolled in the residential institution for the blind established in Auckland by a voluntary agency.

The development of the present range of special education services, which are shown in Appendix I, followed much the same progression as it has done in other countries. The schools for blind and deaf children were followed by two residential schools for backward - i.e. educable mentally retarded children and, from 1917 by the establishment of a network of special classes for these pupils attached to ordinary primary schools. The years between 1920 and 1940 also saw the beginnings of special education for speech handicapped, trainable mentally retarded and physically handicapped children, and for children in hospital. However the greatest progress by far has been made during the past 25 years. The special education services for deaf, visually handicapped, educable and trainable mentally retarded children, and for children with speech defects and children in hospitals have been developed to provide a national coverage; special schools for seriously physically handicapped pupils have been provided wherever sufficient children needing this provision could be identified, and a substantial beginning has been made in developing special classes and schools for emotionally disturbed children. This move has been paralleled by the provision of special schools in psychiatric hospitals and in the state institutions for children in need of care because of their delinquent behaviour or very poor home backgrounds.

More recent developments have included the regrettable necessity to expand our programme for deaf children as a result of an epidemic of maternal rubella in 1963-64. This has required a 70 percent increase over the past three years in the number of teachers employed in schools or classes for the deaf, and the establishment of an assessment and educational unit at our residential school for visually handicapped children to meet the special needs of children with severe defects of both sight and hearing. We are now engaged in pilot educational programmes for children with severe personality disorders - including those medically diagnosed as autistic - and in reviewing the ways in which the special education services can best assist children with specific learning disabilities.

As you will appreciate, many of these special education programmes lean heavily on the insights of clinical and educational psychology. The New Zealand Department of Education has established a national Psychological Service which has, as one of its functions, the assessment of children recommended for admission to special schools, classes and clinics, and the provision of guidance for their teachers.

Enrolments in the various special education programmes at 1 July 1970 are shown in Appendix I to this paper. You will note that it contains no reference to programmes for gifted children, for whom provision is made in ordinary primary and secondary schools, nor does it make any reference to the substantial provision now made within the ordinary school system to meet the special needs of Maori children, who have been handicapped in the past by an inadequate recognition of the educational relevance of their cultural background.

One important feature of the New Zealand special education services is that they are provided almost entirely by the central government as part of the state education system. Voluntary associations co-operate with the state in providing some educational services for blind and seriously physically handicapped children, and private special schools have been established for deaf, severely mentally retarded and socially maladjusted children, but 97 percent of the 8178 pupils receiving full-time special education in July 1970 were enrolled in a state school. There are no legal restrictions on the establishment of private special schools, or of special education services in ordinary private schools but educational provisions for handicapped children have always been, and seem likely to remain, largely a state responsibility. Voluntary agencies are, however, actively involved in the establishment and administration of sheltered workshops for handicapped and disabled adults. These workshops receive substantial Government assistance as a key element in its rehabilitation programme, and considerable progress has been made over the past few years in developing effective liaison between the special education services for handicapped children and youth and the rehabilitation services which will assist them when they leave school.

A second characteristic of the New Zealand special education services is that they each function on a national basis, under central direction in such matters as curriculum, admission criteria, standards of accommodation and equipment, and the salaries and conditions of service of their teachers. A senior officer in the Head Office of the Department of Education is responsible for their co-ordination and development. As a result, all teachers and local administrators in a particular special education service work within a common framework. This statement could be interpreted as implying a rigidly uniform special education service throughout the country, which is certainly not the case. The Department of Education actively encourages teachers to act independently in developing teaching programmes suited to their own pupils needs, and to experiment in finding the most effective ways of using the resources at their disposal. An example is a current project initiated in one district to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of resource-room programmes for educable mentally retarded pupils as an alternative to the traditional special class. It is true, however, that the limited involvement of agencies other than the state in the education of handicapped

children does mean that there are few opportunities in New Zealand to establish completely unorthodox programmes, or for exploratory projects requiring substantial finance. A state education service financed by public funds cannot find the money to sponsor many projects of this kind when it is under heavy pressure to expand all branches of the education service. As a result,we are, to some extent, deprived of the stimulus provided by the diversity of private and state services available in, say, the United States.

If this pattern of state financed and controlled national special education services lacks some of the diversity found elsewhere it has some substantial advantages, at least for a small country such as New Zealand. It has enabled us to make the most effective possible use of the limited pool of persons with the qualifications and experience required for senior teaching and advisory positions in special education, and to plan pre-entry and in-service training programmes for teachers on a national basis, to the advantage of those teachers working in the smaller administrative districts or in the smaller special education services. It has also ensured that all vacancies in these services can be filled by the most suitable applicant available in the whole country. Perhaps the most important advantage of this pattern of control is that it has enabled special education services to be established on the same criteria in all parts of the country. As a result, handicapped children who live in a less wealthy community are as well served as those who live in the more wealthy areas. This is a basic pre-requisite for any fully effective programme for the education of children who have special needs.

Within the limitations imposed by the need to identify sufficient children requiring a particular kind of special education and living within reasonable travelling distance of a centre at which it can be provided, it has therefore been possible to offer many handicapped children living in rural areas and small towns schooling equal in quality to that available in the largest cities. Children who live in areas where special education programme suited to their needs cannot be established may be assisted through the special section of the Department of Education Correspondence School. If this is not appropriate, Government boarding allowances are available to meet all or most of the costs incurred by parents whose children must board away from home to attend a special class or school.

The difficulties encountered over the past 20 years in providing special education for children living in country areas are now being met in some urban areas also, as programmes are being established to meet the special educational needs of children with some of the less common types of handicap. A current example is the problem of providing for children with severe personality disorders, including those sometimes described as autistic. It is now clear that appropriate education may prove the key to the rehabilitation of some of these children. It is equally true that in most cases they should attend their special school or class from their own home, and that their parents should be directly involved in

the treatment programme. But these children are so few in number that it will be impossible to provide a separate service for them within easy travelling distance of their homes unless they live in a large city. The problem is insoluble in these terms. The solution must lie in learning how to make full use of existing special education services to help these children and any others whose handicaps do not fit neatly into any of the generally recognised categories of special education.

A third feature of New Zealand's special education services is their close administrative and professional links with the ordinary school system, of which they form an integral part. New Zealand educators, teachers and parents have been generally reluctant to set handicapped children any further apart from their peers than is strictly necessary to meet their special educational needs, if only because the majority of children who are handicapped are best educated in an ordinary classroom provided they, and their teachers, can receive any specialist guidance or other additional assistance which they require. This attitude is reflected in the administration and professional supervision of the special education services.

At the school level each principal has a direct administrative responsibility for any special classes located at his school. Their teachers are full members of his staff and work under his supervision. At the district level all inspectors supervising special education retain some important responsibilities in matters not related to this field, and they work with teachers of ordinary classes. This is true even in the largest districts, where other inspectors assist the inspector supervising special education to ensure that he can retain his links with the school system as a whole. The administration of special education is evolving with the steady growth of the educational services for handicapped children, but it seems certain that future changes will respect the general desire to ensure that these services, and those who administer them, retain effective links at all levels with the education services and programmes for children who are not handicapped.

As you might expect, therefore, New Zealand children requiring special education are much more likely to be enrolled in a special class attached to an ordinary school than in a separate day school. Special day schools have been established only for children with severe mental or physical handicaps. The residential schools established for deaf and educable mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed children are now intended primarily to cater for children who are unable to attend a special class, and, as my colleague Mr Young will illustrate, function as integral parts of the national service for handicapped children. Furthermore, the advisory and guidance services associated with the special education programmes accept a clear responsibility to assist those teachers in ordinary classrooms who have handicapped pupils, and these pupils can be provided with any special equipment, such as typewriters or classroom furniture which they require.

In line with this approach, but in contrast to the policy followed in some other countries, teachers employed in the special education services receive the same salaries as teachers working in ordinary classes. Like them, they receive allowances for recognised additional qualifications, but they do not receive a special salary allowance simply because they are working in a special education service.

The guidelines for this paper requested that some reference be made to pertinent laws regarding services for handicapped children and youth. I am perhaps fortunate in this respect, in that it is the New Zealand practice to provide no more than the essential minimum of legislative authority for its educational services. The formal framework for the administration of the New Zealand education system is provided by the 1964 Education Act and its subsequent amendments, supplemented by regulations issued under powers conferred by the act. These regulations deal with such matters as the procedures for the appointment of teachers, the organisation and administration of schools, and the training of teachers.

The authority for the establishment and maintenance of all the special education services for which the New Zealand Department of Education is responsible is derived from three sections (Sections 98-100) of the 1964 Education Act. They empower the Minister of Education to establish, or authorise the establishment of, any special school, class, clinic or service, and to provide financial assistance to other classes or services providing special education. They also authorise the issue of regulations covering the administration of the special education services. These sections are essentially similar to the sections in the earlier legislation which they replaced.

It is perhaps indicative of the status of special education in New Zealand that it has so far proved neither desirable nor necessary to issue any regulations specifically relating to it, because the necessary provisions have been made in the general regulations. The same procedures have been followed with respect to the financial provision for the special education services. With the exception of certain items relating to the residential schools administered directly by the Department of Education the funds required by the special education services are included under the appropriate general headings of the Department of Education's annual estimates of expenditure. They are not separately appropriated. Thus the salaries for teachers employed in the special education services are appropriated under the item for teacher salaries, and the funds for building accommodation for special schools, classes and clinics are listed under the item for school buildings.

The development of New Zealand's special education services has now reached the stage at which emphasis can be shifted from establishing programmes for children with obvious unmet needs to a greater concern for the quality of the education offered to each handicapped pupil. This change has brought into greater prominence some trends and questions which

will become increasingly important in the future. They will be familiar to you all, and I mention some of them in this final section mainly to point up our common interests and responsibilities.

The four trends I wish to note are:

1. A steady increase in special education services for handicapped pre-school children.

2. Closer liaison between the special education services and the health and welfare services for handicapped children.

3. Close co-operation between the various special education services themselves, as those working with different groups of handicapped children come to appreciate that they have more in common than was previously realised and that they have much to learn from each other, and as more attention is paid to the particular needs of multi-handicapped children.

4. Increasing emphasis on the importance of specialist pre-entry and in-service training for teachers of handicapped children as the key determinant of the quality of the education provided in our special schools, classes and clinics.

Finally, two fundamental issues which we face in our present planning. The first is the need to determine the future areas of responsibility for the special education services. Accepting that there will always be some handicapped children who cannot be educated in an ordinary class, and a smaller group who require education in a special school, where should the dividing line be drawn as regular classes become better able to meet the needs of individual children? This issue is particularly important for the comparatively large groups of children whose handicaps are less severe, and who could perhaps be adequately catered for in ordinary classes provided the necessary supporting and advisory services were available. Research, and our own experience, has shown that this is certainly true for some mildly mentally retarded and partially-deaf children. We may see a significant shift in the pattern of provision for these and other handicapped children over the next decade. If this does occur, however, it should follow from progress in resolving the second issue I wish to mention. It is the perennial problem of deciding the criteria and methods which should be used in evaluating our special education programmes so that we can make informed decisions about them. I can do no more than state the problem, which concerns all education programmes, and not only those for handicapped children. It seems likely to become increasingly important for those who must plan our services for handicapped children and youth.

This paper has been, of necessity, written in very general terms. To complement it, by giving you a more detailed picture of one of our larger special education services, my colleague Mr Young, who is the principal of one of our two state schools for deaf children, will describe some of the main features of

our education programme for children with defective hearing. We hope that our combined presentations will provide the basis for a useful discussion.

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE SERVICES

AT 1 JULY 1970

The figures for the numbers of pupils shown in this summary are subject to correction. Official statistics on the number of children receiving special education at public primary schools (including all special schools) are given in Table 1.5 of Part 1 of "Education Statistics of New Zealand".

	Special Schools	Clinics or Special Classes	Number Pupils	Number Teachers
SECTION 1				
BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED CHILDREN				
(a) Classes for Partially Sighted Children		1	5	1
(b) Resource Centres for Blind and Partially Partially Sighted Children		1	45	2
(c) Residential and Day School for Blind and Partially Sighted Children - Homai College (see Section 3)	1		153	29
(d) Correspondence School - Special Section (see Section 13)			1	(5)
	1	2	204	32
SECTION 2				
DEAF AND PARTIALLY HEARING CHILDREN				
(a) Classes for Partially Hearing Children		3	26	3
(b) Classes for Deaf Children				
(i) at Primary and Intermediate Schools		34	246	34
(ii) at Secondary Schools		6	44	6
(c) Pre-school classes for Deaf Children*		3	11	3
(d) Residential and Day Schools for Deaf Children*	2		319	62
(e) Itinerant Teacher for Deaf Children*				3
(f) Advisers on Deaf Children*				11
(g) Correspondence School - Special Section (see Section 13)			3	(5)
	2	46	649	122
SECTION 3				
CHILDREN WITH SEVERE DEFECTS OF BOTH SIGHT AND HEARING ('DEAF-BLIND' CHILDREN)				
Unit for Deaf-Blind Children - Homai College (see under Section 1 (c))		(3)	(5)	(3)
SECTION 4				
CHILDREN WITH SPEECH HANDICAPS				
Speech Clinics		106	3436	106

*Indicates a service provided directly by the Department of Education. Homai College is administered by the N.Z. Foundation for the Blind and financed by the Government, and the Prison Education Service is administered by the Department of Justice. The Department of Education pays the salaries of the tutors employed by the N.Z. League for the Hard of Hearing and the welfare and placement officer employed by the Auckland Friends of the Deaf. The other services listed in this directory are controlled by the Education Boards, or by the Board of Governors of the Secondary School in which they are located. Bracketed figures ( ) are included in the total for another section, e.g. the figures for the Deaf-Blind unit (Section 3) are included under Section I(c) Homai College.

	Special Schools	Clinics or Special Classes	Numbers Pupils	Number Teachers
SECTION 5				
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED AND DELICATE CHILDREN				
(a) Day Schools for Cerebral Palsied Children	6		149	18
(b) Health Camp Schools	6		285	16
(c) Hospital Classes		48	584	48
(d) Classes and Schools for Physically Handicapped Children	2	1	98	8
(e) Home Emergency and Convalescent Schools	2		28	2
(f) Correspondence School - Special Section (see Section 13)			78	5
	16	49	1222	97
SECTION 6				
BACKWARD CHILDREN				
(a) Classes for Backward Children				
(i) At Primary and Intermediate Schools		211	2689	211
(ii) At Secondary Schools (Experience Classes)		42	528	42
(b) Residential Schools for Backward Children*	2		174	14
(c) Schools in Mental Health Division Institutions (see Section 14)	5		168	10
(d) Correspondence School - Special Section* (see Section 13)			16	(5)
	7	253	3675	277
SECTION 7				
INTELLECTUALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN				
(a) Day schools				
(i) 12+ pupils	30		1144	124
(ii) 5-11 pupils	11		107	22
(b) Correspondence School - Home Training Section* (see Section 13)			165	4
	41		1416	150
SECTION 8				
EDUCATIONALLY RETARDED CHILDREN				
(a) Reading Clinics		12	189	12
(b) Correspondence School - Special Section (see Section 13)			51	(5)
		12	240	12

	Special Schools	Clinics or Special Classes	Number Pupils	Number Teachers
SECTION 9 MALADJUSTED CHILDREN				
(a) Classes for Maladjusted Children		10	82	10
(b) Residential Schools for Maladjusted Children*	1		24	5
(c) Schools in Mental Health Division Institutions (see Section 14)	3		41	4
(d) Schools in Child Welfare Division Training Centres* (see Section 15)	4		172	21
(e) Schools in Child Welfare Division Homes* (see Section 15)	6		83	7
(f) Correspondence School - Special Section (see Section 13)			23	(5)
	14	10	425	47
SECTION 10 PRISON EDUCATION	7		347*	11
SECTION 11				
(A) N.Z. LEAGUE FOR THE HARD OF HEARING				25
(B) FRIENDS OF THE DEAF (INC.)				1
				26
SECTION 12 GUIDANCE SERVICES				
(a) Psychological Service - Psychologists				55
- Organisers of Special Classes				20
(b) Visiting Teachers				35
(c) Guidance Counsellors				47
(d) Guidance Teachers				2
(e) Vocational Guidance Service*				
(f) Child Welfare Division*				
				159
TOTALS	88	478	11,614	1,039

	Special Schools	Clinics or Special Classes	Number Pupils	Number Teacher
SECTION 13				
CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL - PROVISIONS FOR HANDICAPPED PUPILS*				
(a) Blind and Partially Sighted Children (See Section 1)			(1)	
(b) Deaf and Partially Hearing Children (See Section 2)			(3)	(5)
(c) Physically Handicapped and Delicate Children (See Section 5)			(78)	
(d) Backward Children (See Section 6)			(16)	
(e) Educationally Retarded Children (See Section 8)			(51)	
(f) Maladjusted Children (See Section 9)			(23)	
(g) Home Training Section (see Section 7)			(165)	(4)
			(337)	(9)
SECTION 14				
SCHOOLS AND CLASSES IN HOSPITALS AND TRAINING SCHOOLS OF THE MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH				
(a) Schools for Backward Children (see Section 6)	(5)		(168)	(10)
(b) Schools for Maladjusted Children (see Section 9)	(3)		(41)	(4)
	(8)		(209)	(14)
SECTION 15				
SCHOOLS AND CLASSES IN CHILD WELFARE DIVISION INSTITUTIONS*				
(a) Schools in Training Centres (see Section 9)	(4)		(172)	(21)
(b) Schools in Child Welfare Homes (see Section 9)	(6)		(83)	(7)
	(10)		(255)	(28)
SECTION 16				
PRIVATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS	7 (Not included in totals)		253	

My colleague, Mr. Ross, has presented a general outline of the organisation to provide for the educational needs of our exceptional children and it is my task to present specific details of how one of the specialist services - the Education of the Deaf Children - operates within the broader system.

Educational provision for deaf children in New Zealand commenced in 1880 when a teacher trained in the oral method was appointed to establish a school in Christchurch, the major city in the South Island.

It was established at that time that the education of the deaf children was to be the responsibility of the Department of Education, instruction was to be free of charge to the parents and the teaching was to be by the oral method. Although many changes and advances have been made during the past 90 years we still adhere to the three basic policies established at the inception of the service.

For administration purposes, New Zealand is divided into two divisions on a population basis for education, administration and oversight of the hearing-impaired children. The northern area of the North Island with which I am directly concerned is administered from the base school , the School for Deaf, Kelston, Auckland. The responsibility for the services for the remainder of the country is centred on our first established school in Sumner, Christchurch.

Our responsibility for the education of deaf children commences when a child is first diagnosed as suffering from an irreversible hearing loss and while we have started with children as young as four months old, the average age of diagnosis is 22 months. The work with pre-school children is undertaken by Advisers on Deaf Children who work in close co-operation with medical services to assist with diagnoses.

The Advisers are experienced teachers who have had additional training in Audiology, and it is their function to fit the appropriate hearing aid, which is available free to all children, and to provide regular guidance to parents. The service operates throughout the whole country and the Advisers, while on the staff of one of the Schools for Deaf, work in an itinerant capacity.

During the early years every effort is made to assist language and speech development and parents are encouraged to enrol their deaf youngsters in our regular pre-school facilities. When the child nears school age, a recommendation concerning the educational placement is made to the Principal of the School for Deaf by the Advisory Service and by Department of Education Psychological Service. The following alternatives are available:-

The regular community school for hearing children
A class for deaf children attached to a regular school
A School for Deaf Children.

The following table indicates the number of children enrolled in each of the above systems in the Kelston School for Deaf area:-

Pre-School Children	Regular Community Schools	Classes for Deaf Children attached to Regular Schools. District Classes	Special School for Deaf Children
70	450	130	200

The children who remain in the regular schools are visited frequently by the Adviser who provides assistance to the class teacher. The youngsters in this category tend to be the less handicapped group, although since our Advisory Service commenced a higher percentage of deaf children have been able to cope in regular schools. In a number of centres itinerant teachers of the deaf have been employed to provide additional individual work for these children.

The provision of classes for deaf children - known as Unit Classes - attached to regular schools may be divided into two categories.

1. District day classes which may be established in any centre which has a reasonably homogeneous group of at least five children.

2. Deaf classes in regular schools in close proximity to the major School for Deaf.

In the Kelston area there are district unit Classes attached to various levels of regular community schools in the two largest provincial towns, Hamilton and Rotorua. The children are taught by a trained teacher of the deaf and professional oversight is provided by an Advisory Committee on which the Principal of Kelston is represented.

These classes have been developed in the last decade and are the result of the desire to have our deaf children associating with their hearing peer group while still retaining the advantage of being taught by a teacher of the deaf. In the Auckland metropolitan area all young deaf children who are unable to cope in regular schools are admitted to the Kelston School for Deaf - either as day pupils for city children, or as boarding pupils if the children live in country areas. The youngsters who make satisfactory progress in language and speech development are then transferred with a teacher of the deaf to a local community school where they work in association with a group of hearing children of the same age.

The special feature of this system is that all teachers of deaf in the regular school remain on the staff of the School for Deaf. Both day and boarding pupils may be included in the classes and a flexibility of placement is retained so that a child who does not adopt to the regular school can be easily returned to the School for Deaf. This system, which involves a larger number of children, enables better homogenity in the grouping of children and makes association with regular classes easier to accomplish than is possible in district day classes. These classes also provide an excellent transitional stage for children who have made sufficient progress to be considered for return to a regular school.

Last on the list of provisions for our deaf children is our major day/residential schools which are now tending to cater for only the severely handicapped children and those who have handicaps in addition to deafness.

Because of the sparseness of our population it is impossible for all our children to attend classes for deaf children as day pupils, and at Kelston it is necessary to board 110 children. The remainder of the children attending are day pupils from the Auckland Metropolitan area and are transported free in special buses or taxis.

Kelston is a modern well equipped school which, as well as catering for 200 children, has developed as the resource centre for all the services and classes for deaf children in the area. For example, the base school is responsible for the provision and maintenance of all hearing aid equipment and technical staff are employed for this purpose.

Senior staff from Kelston provide oversight and guidance for teachers in all Unit Classes and have also undertaken provision of schemes of work and the development of audio-visual equipment required throughout the area.

In addition to our provision for New Zealand children we have also catered for a number of children from the Cook Islands and Niue Island; and this year we are providing professional assistance for the Cook Islands where a class for deaf children is being established.

Finally, I wish to comment briefly on a few of the features in our system which I consider are of special interest. They are:-

1. All hearing-impaired children, irrespective of where they live in our country, have the same educational services and opportunities available. These services commence when a child is diagnosed as having a hearing loss, continue throughout the years of schooling and have now been extended to include a welfare service for the adult deaf.

2. The Principals of the Schools for Deaf have ready access to all education areas and are accepted as consultants by all educational authorities.

3. The flexibility which our system permits in the placement of hearing-impaired children.

   Transfer of children from one education area to another presents no problems and this has encouraged our teachers and administrators in regular schools to accept hearing-impaired children because they know they will receive assistance from the School for Deaf and alternative placement can be made if necessary.

4. We have maintained high standards in the selection and training of our teachers of the deaf.

5. We have been fortunate that the employment situation has been very favourable and that we have no problems finding suitable employment for our young deaf people.

While we are very proud of our achievements over the past 90 years and have every confidence in our system of education of our deaf people, we are by no means complacent and fully realise that we must develop all our services to a higher degree of efficiency if our youngsters are to continue to enjoy acceptance and independence in the future.

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